

SECTION 3 – COUNTY-BASED ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND RESOURCES

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COUNTY-BASED ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND RESOURCES

COUNTY/COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Identifying sources of information within the county and the links for coordinating services for children in foster care are necessary foundations for the foster care PHN to function effectively. The only way to get the job done is to build and cultivate relationships.

The sources of information and the links for coordinating services become visible as you ask and accumulate answers to several questions. To most effectively obtain answers to these questions, initiate meeting with a variety of people who work with or support children in foster care. Use the meeting as an opportunity to begin building your relationships.

Several questions transcend positions or agency. These questions are provided first, followed by some specific questions you may want to add as you meet with staff from a particular agency or in a particular role. Remember to add to this list to personalize your interaction with those you meet.

The general questions include:

- Who are the players?
- What are their programs and/or responsibilities?
- What are their needs for health care assistance?
- How do they view the foster care PHN role? Is it consistent with your view?
- How is information exchanged with the foster care PHN?
- What do they see as pressing issues?

To get started, the following are some people to meet early on, as well as, some suggestions for additional questions or areas of focus.

1. Human Services Department

a. Unit Supervisors for:

- 1) Emergency Response
- 2) Family Maintenance
- 3) Family Preservation
- 4) Court Services
- 5) Family Reunification
- 6) Permanency Planning
- 7) Any other units or programs, such as, specialized foster care home, or Independent Living Program (ILP)

- b. Licensing Workers – Is there any pattern to incidents investigated that suggests a need for health care, medical or safety training? How does

- licensing and placement work together to match a child needing placement with a caretaker? When is the PHN consulted?
- c. Eligibility workers – Are specific workers assigned for foster care? Establish a contact person.
 - d. Social Workers or Child Welfare Workers – To initially introduce yourself, request to attend unit meetings.
 - e. CWS/CMS Support Person – What is the PHN’s access to the system? Who is designated in the county to receive any change requests?
 - f. Clerical and legal clerical staff.
2. Children’s Shelter
 - a. Shelter Supervisor
 - b. Medical/Nursing Coordinator – How is continuity maintained and follow-up assured after child leaves the shelter?
 3. Juvenile Hall – Identify and meet coordinator for medical/health services.
 4. CHDP
 - a. PHNs working in other programs
 - 1) What is CHDP?
 - 2) How do children in foster care interface with the CHDP Program?
 - 3) What resources are available through CHDP?
 - 4) How can the CHDP provider network be accessed?
 - 5) What assistance is available for referrals to specialists, other programs, community resources?
 - 6) How can CHDP help with accessing services for children and for youth placed out of county?
 - 7) Establish a contact person at CHDP.
 - b. CHDP PHNs
 - 1) What are the protocols for intensive informing (PM 357/SAWS) and follow-up care (PM 160) for children in foster care within the county, when placed out of county, and for placements from other counties?
 - 2) In what projects is CHDP involved jointly with other programs, agencies, community clinics, etc?
 - 3) Identify the CHDP and California Children’s Services (CCS) liaisons to the Managed Care plans if you have managed care in your county.
 - 4) Identify the CCS liaison to the Regional Center and Early Start.
 - 5) Locate the CHDP Provider Manual and Health Assessment Guidelines.
 - 6) Locate and become familiar with Program Letters, Provider Letters and Information Notices.

5. County Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans
 - a. Medical
 - 1) What type of managed care plan(s) is in your county?
 - 2) How are children in foster care provided services when they live within the county, when placed out of county?
 - 3) Establish a contact person (at each plan if there is more than one in the county).
 - b. Mental Health
 - 1) How are children in foster care provided services when they live within the county, when placed out of county?
 - 2) What services are available for immediate care needs?
 - 3) What are the procedures for obtaining out of plan benefits, e.g., Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Supplemental Services?
 - 4) Establish a contact person.
6. Partial List of other resources
 - a. Identify a contact and set up a meeting to learn about services provided by the following:
 - 1) Regional Center
 - 2) Easter Seals
 - 3) CCS
 - 4) Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA)
 - 5) Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
 - 6) Field Public Health Nursing
 - 7) Hospital Pediatric and Nursery Discharge Coordinators
 - 8) School Nurses
 - 9) WIC
 - 10) Any Large Clinic/Provider
 - 11) HIV Prevention Unit
 - 12) High Risk Infant Program
 - 13) Parenting Program
 - 14) Drug Alternative Program
 - 15) Attorneys for children in foster care
 - 16) Groups such as Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD), Child Abuse Council, Foster Parent Association, Grandparents Parenting Again, etc.
 - b. Ask about:
 - 1) Grants/Scholarships
 - a) Are there any program grants available?
 - b) Does the Foster Parent Association offer scholarships, and if so, for what purposes?
 - 2) Special Funds, e.g., Special Care Incentives and Assistance Program (SCIAP). Note the information on SCIAP in Section 1.

- 3) Community or Volunteer Programs, e.g., Lions Club for eye glasses, or Elks Major Project for physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy.
- 4) Other Children's Health Programs
 - a) Healthy Families
 - b) Kaiser Permanente Care for Kids
 - c) California Kids

WRITTEN RESOURCES

Numerous documents are available to assist with understanding the Child Welfare System (CSW) and how it is regulated, to define policies and procedures for all involved in the CSW, and to keep up with changes. There are also written plans or agreements defining how agencies will work together. Locate the following:

1. Foster Care Regulations and information
 - a. All County Welfare Directors Letters (ACWDL)
 - b. Welfare and Institutions Code – Section 300 of the Regulations
 - c. Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 7.5 – Foster Family Homes
 - d. Division 31 Child Welfare Services Program Manual of Policies and Procedures
 - e. References to special populations, e.g., Immigrant status
2. Foster Care Protocols, such as HIV Risk Assessment, Medically Fragile Infant, Teen Pregnancy, etc.
3. Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) or Interagency Agreements (IAAs) between CHDP and Human Services Department, CHDP and Mental Health and CHDP and Medi-Cal Managed Care.
4. Title 17, Subchapter 13 CHDP
5. Medi-Cal Provider Manual, Denti-Cal Provider Manual.
6. Community Resource Guides for Domestic Violence, Mental Health Services, Advocacy Groups, such as MATRIX, Early Start, Teen Parenting, County Human Services Resources Guide, etc.

FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS

The greatest resources for our children and youth in foster care are the foster parents, group homes, or other facilities who provide the 24 hour care and supervision for these children. A major role of the child welfare worker, foster care PHN, and all of the previously mentioned resources is to support foster parents in this endeavor.

Choice of foster placement is dependent upon a number of factors, such as the child's needs, availability of a relative to care for the child, foster home availability, skill level of care giver to meet child's needs, etc. The following are a few questions to help you start learning about your foster parents, and the foster family agencies (FFAs) or group homes in your area.

1. Individual Homes

- a. Relative care givers or Kin-Care Placements – How can you identify children who are placed with relatives? Is there a local support group for relative care givers? What financial and social service support is available for relative care givers?
- b. Non-relative care givers for foster parents - Are there specialized homes for medically fragile infants/children? Are there therapeutic foster homes, or homes which accept direct placements? What support is available to these foster parents? Is there a Foster Parent Association?

2. Group Homes

Some group homes specialize in children or youth with a particular need, such as developmental delay or substance abuse, while others may base intake on the age or sex of the children. Some are strictly for foster care placement, while others may accept private placements, or youth from the juvenile probation system. You may have a group home referred to as a "Level 12" or "Level 14". This rating designates the intensity of the services the home provides. Try to meet the director or health care coordinator to learn more about each home.

- a. What is age, gender and type of children or youth in each group home?
- b. What is the usual length of stay?
- c. What counties place children or youth in the home?
- d. Who is the contact person?
- e. Is there a health coordinator?
- f. What role can the PHN play with the home?
- g. What are the needs, e.g., health education, referral sources, Medi-Cal Managed Care problem-solving?
- h. What mechanism will be most effective for communication?

3. Foster Family Agencies

The County Welfare Department may contract with FFAs to provide care to children in either individual homes or in a group home setting. The FFA monitors the foster parents' compliance with regulations and provides education and

support to these foster parents. The FFAs and group homes must comply with all of the state regulations governing foster homes. Generally, children in the care of FFAs have a case worker assigned by the FFA in addition to the county child welfare worker. Establish a contact person at each of the FFAs. What type support is provided to foster parents by the FFA and what needs can the PHN address?

FOSTER CARE EDUCATION

A very important hat the foster care PHN wears is that of educator. The foster care PHN is involved in meeting the educational needs of a variety of people, i.e., foster parents, FFAs or group homes, social workers, eligibility workers, CHDP providers, judges and other county or community agencies. In some counties, the PHN is mainly a consultant to social workers or foster parents on a one-on-one basis, while in others the PHN may be heavily involved in developing and/or presenting classes or programs. Answers to the questions listed below may help you to get started in assessing some of the educational needs, learning resources and programs already in place, and in defining what your role might be in the foster care education process.

1. Foster Parent Needs/Resources
 - a. How are these needs determined, and how are they met?
 - b. Is foster care education provided through the local junior college? Meet the program coordinator.
 - c. How is new foster parent orientation handled?
 - d. Who coordinates the Independent Living Program? Meet the coordinator.
 - e. What are the educational needs of group homes, FFAs, specialized foster parent programs, such as the Therapeutic Foster Parents?
 - f. What role can the PHN play in meeting needs?
 - g. Who are contacts/resources?
2. Social Workers
 - a. What trainings are needed by the social workers regarding health care, medical conditions, developmental issues, health protocols, e.g., HIV Risk Assessment, and the CHDP Program? Who needs to be contacted at the Human Services Department to set up training?
 - b. What consultations are needed regarding health care resources, accessing Medi-Cal, interpreting medical records, information about specific medical conditions or medications, planning/obtaining services for children being placed out of county, etc.?
3. Eligibility Worker – Who informs the eligibility workers about the CHDP Program?
4. CHDP Providers
 - a. Do CHDP providers understand the special needs of children in the Child Welfare System?
 - b. What trainings for consultations are needed for Medi-Cal issues with children in foster care placed from another county?
5. What role can the foster care PHN play in educating other agencies and the community at large regarding the needs of children in foster care?

Advocating for the health care needs of children and youth in foster care will take you down many different paths. Some are straight-forward while others are most challenging with many twists, turns, and an occasional dead-end. When you wonder where to turn next...remember, a foster care PHN colleague is just a phone call away!